

CLAIMS:

1. A scalpel having a handle with a longitudinally extending cavity therein, a blade carrier within the cavity and movable longitudinally relative to the handle between an operative position in which a blade carried thereby is exposed for use at an open end of the cavity and an inoperative position in which a blade carried thereby is retracted within the cavity in the handle, and a manually operable slider associated with the blade carrier and passing through a slot in a wall of the handle at an edge thereof, herein termed the top edge; the scalpel being characterized in that the handle is moulded as a single piece moulding with an integral bridge defining an endless open end to the cavity through which the blade carrier may be introduced into the cavity and in that the slider is formed as a separate part that snap fits to the blade carrier after introduction through the open end of the cavity to form a blade carrier and slider assembly.
2. A scalpel as claimed in claim 1 in which the slider and at least one longitudinally extending edge of the slot are provided with co-operating tooth and notch formations that cooperate to releasably hold the blade carrier and slider assembly in "click-stop" manner in the operative and inoperative positions.
3. A scalpel as claimed in claim 1 in which for the blade carrier and slider assembly have an innermost, terminal locked position defined by co-operating formations on the slider and edges of the slot, such terminal locked position being one in which the blade carrier is located inwards of the normal inoperative position and from which it is substantially impossible to unlock the blade carrier, at least for practical purposes.

4. A scalpel as claimed in claim 2 in which a plurality of notches are associated with both the operative and inoperative positions of the blade carrier and slider assembly so that a series of at least two, and optionally three or more "click-stops" are associated with each of the operative and inoperative positions.
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5. A scalpel as claimed in claim 2 in which the "click-stops" are configured to create an audible sound upon engagement of a tooth with a notch.
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6. A scalpel as claimed in claim 1 in which the slider has a pair of transverse tongues with oppositely directed catch formations at their inner ends for cooperating with cooperant transverse sockets formed in the blade carrier.
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7. A scalpel as claimed in claim 6 in which the tongues are coplanar and spaced apart in the longitudinal direction of the slider.
8. A scalpel as claimed in claim 1 in which the blade carrier is configured such that it can accept a plurality of different style blades.
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